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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Central Intelligence Bulletin

Top Secret

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4 August 1970

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Approved For Release 2003/06/12 : CIA-RDP79T00975A016800090002-5

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Libya: The government has come up with a new tactic to gain control over Libya's oil economy.

The Ministry of Petroleum has proposed that some foreign oil industry service organizations operating in Libya--such as drilling contractors, oil-well service companies, and related construction firms--form joint-ventures as minority shareholders with the Libyan National Oil Company. Implicit in the proposal is the threat that if the companies approached do not agree, the government will turn to competing firms in Libya.

The selected firms apparently see no alternative to remaining in Libya, and some probably will accept the proposal even though the financial and management details have not been defined. The Libyan maneuver will provide the national oil company with access to essential skills necessary to operate any oil fields that might be nationalized.

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